

REMARKS

This paper is filed in response to the Office Action dated September 8, 2003. Claims 1-4 and 15-29 are currently pending. No claims have been amended in this response. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 15, 17-18 and 23-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,384,444 to Sakoh ("Sakoh"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,598,460 to Owens et al. ("Owens"), U.S. Patent No. 6,404,001 to Koo et al. ("Koo"), U.S. Patent No. 5,420,449 to Oji ("Oji"), and U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0013632 to Richiuso ("Richiuso"). The rejection is respectfully traversed as discussed below.

Claims 2-4, 16, and 19-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Sakoh in view of Owens, Koo, Oji, Richiuso and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,040,596 to Choi et al. ("Choi"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant has included with this response a translation of priority document Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-005336, filed January 14, 2000. Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are supported by the priority document, thus entitling the claims to rely on January 14, 2000 as their effective filing date in the U.S. The primary reference cited against the claims, U.S. Patent No. 6,384,444 to Sakoh, has a U.S. filing date of December 6, 2000. Thus, applicant respectfully submits that U.S. Patent No. 6,384,444 to Sakoh is not prior art under section 103(a). Accordingly, for at least the above reason, applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1-4 and 15-29 be withdrawn.

The Office Action also included various comments concerning the art and the non-patentability of features in various of the above mentioned claims. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's non-patentability conclusions. The Examiner's comments not specifically discussed above are deemed moot at this time in view of this response.

Applicant respectfully submits that pending claims 1-4 and 15-29 are in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested. If, for any reason, the application is not in condition for allowance, applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner

telephone the undersigned to discuss the steps necessary to place the application into condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on Jan. 8, 2004.

Alan S. Raynes Jan. 8, 2004
Alan S. Raynes (Date)